

Message Text

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13
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /064 W
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O R 181041Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2709
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSNAVEUR UK
COMSIXTHFLT

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 5661

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, IS, LE
SUBJECT: EXPLANATION OF ISRAELI NAVAL ACTIVITY OFF LEBANON

1. RESPONDING TO A CORRESPONDENT'S QUESTION YESTERDAY, DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PERES DENIED THAT ISRAEL WAS BLOCKADING THE LEBANESE COAST. HE SAID: "THERE IS NO (ISRAELI) LAND OR NAVAL INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANON." PERES ADDED THAT SHIPS RECENTLY DETAINED WERE THOSE WHICH HAD VIOLATED ISRAELI TERRITORIAL WATERS OR WERE SUSPECTED OF TRANSPORTING TERRORISTS TO ISRAEL. ONE SHIP HAD CALLED FOR HELP AND WAS BROUGHT TO ISRAEL. IN ALL CASES, ACCORDING TO PERES, THE SHIPS WERE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE AFTER BEING SEARCHED.

2. TODAY'S JERUSALEM POST ATTRIBUTED TO "SOURCES" AND "OFFICIALS" THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATION OF ISRAEL'S ACTIVITY OFF THE LEBANESE COAST:
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A. SINCE JUNE 1, THE ISRAELI NAVY HAD STOPPED SIX

VESSELS COMING FROM OR BOUND FOR LEBANON.

B. ISRAEL HAS TO KEEP CLOSE SCRUTINY ON MOVEMENT OF HOSTILE ELEMENTS THROUGH AND NEAR ITS WATERS, JUST AS IT KEEPS A WATCH ON THEIR MOVEMENT IN THE VICINITY OF ITS LAND BORDERS. NAVAL POLICY WAS ONE OF "STOP AND IDENTIFY." THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF PREVENTING ACCESS TO LEBANESE SHORES.

C. OFFICIALS WERE NOT AWARE THAT ANY FRIENDLY POWER HAD COMMENTED ON THE NAVAL PATROLS OR PROTESTED INTERFERENCE. THEY DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT FRIENDLY VESSELS WOULD BE STOPPED--BUT ONLY VESSELS FROM COUNTRIES PROFESSING HOSTILITY TO ISRAEL AND SUSPECTED OF COLLABORATION WITH THE TERRORISTS.

D. ISRAEL HAD MADE OVERLAND PENETRATIONS INTO LEBANON IN THE PAST TO STRIKE AT TERRORISTS AND REGARDED ITS NAVAL PATROLS AS AN EXTENSION OF THE SAME PRINCIPLE.

3. TODAY'S PRESS MENTIONS A SOVIET NOTE TO THE U.S. PROTESTING THE ISRAELI "BLOCKADE" OF LEBANON BUT SAID SOURCES IN JERUSALEM DENIED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD APPROACHED THE ISRAELIS ON THIS SUBJECT "EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY." A NEWSCAST THIS MORNING SAID THAT THE SECRETARY HAD CALLED AMBASSADOR DINITZ IN TO DISCUSS THE SOVIET NOTE AND TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON LEBANON.
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